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## CALIFORNIA STATE THREAT ASSESSMENT CENTER

**24-HOUR REPORT****28 MARCH 2018**

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**(U) CALIFORNIA****(U) Los Angeles – Suspected Arson At Joshua Tree Park**

(U) A suspected arson fire at Joshua Tree National Park in California has damaged a historical landmark. The fire that broke out late 26 March damaged the Oasis of Mara, a site settled by Native Americans who planted the 29 palm trees that inspired the name of the nearby city Twentynine Palms, according to the National Park Service. Strong winds stoked the rapid spread of the fire, which was contained at less than a square mile, said Eric Sherwin, a spokesman for the San Bernardino County Fire Department.

SOURCE: 27 March 2018, [Associated Press](#)

**(U) San Mateo – Police Detain Man For Alleged School Shooting Threat**

(U) Police have detained a man who allegedly threatened to shoot up a school while trying to buy a gun at a Northern California sporting goods store. Police in San Mateo, California placed the man in protective custody on Monday after he admitted to making the threat. Officers took the man to a hospital for a mental health evaluation and threat assessment after he told police he was joking and apologized. Police say a customer overheard the man tell an employee at a Big 5 Sporting Goods store he wanted to buy a gun and shoot up a school. The employee did not sell the man a gun. Authorities increased security at schools in the area but felt there was no immediate danger.

SOURCE: 27 March 2018, [Associated Press](#)

**(U) SOUTHWEST BORDER****(U) Texas – US CBP Stops 33 Pounds of Methamphetamine at Bridge of the Americas**

(U) El Paso – A driver was arrested after 33 pounds of methamphetamine were found in the spare tire of a vehicle on 26 March at the Bridge of the Americas in El Paso, officials said. US Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers found the meth at 6:30 AM while inspecting a SUV crossing the border, CBP said in a news release. An X-ray scan showed anomalies in the vehicle's spare tire, which contained 14 packages of meth, CBP said. CBP said that a 49-year-old man from Mexico was handed over to the El Paso County Sheriff's Office to face drug smuggling charges.

SOURCE: 27 March 2018, [El Paso Times](#)

**(U) NATIONAL****(U) District of Columbia – Suspect Arrested over Explosives Sent to Washington Sites**

(U) Washington – Authorities have arrested Thanh Cong Phan, 43, who is suspected of sending a series of suspicious packages to military bases and government sites in the Washington, DC area, the FBI announced yesterday. It said the packages contained "potential destructive devices" and cautioned that similar packages could have been mailed that have not yet been found. A law enforcement source says there does not appear to be any connection to terrorism. The packages were mailed by the US Postal Service from the state of Washington to about 10 federal facilities in DC area, including the CIA. All of the contents of the packages were similar.

SOURCE: 27 March 2018, [NPR](#)

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**UNCLASSIFIED//FOR OFFICIAL USE ONLY****(U) Georgia – Atlanta Still Grappling With Widespread Computer Hack**

(U) Atlanta – Atlanta is still struggling with its ability to collect online payments of bills and fees, officials said on 26 March, four days after a ransomware attack snarled the computer system of Georgia's capital city. Hackers caused outages of services offered through the city's website and broader computer system while demanding a ransom of \$51,000 paid in bitcoin to unlock the system. Mayor Keisha Lance did not say whether Atlanta would pay the ransom. Atlanta officials said they have determined the hackers' identity but declined to elaborate.

SOURCE: 27 March 2018, [Reuters](#)

**(U) INTERNATIONAL****(U) Ecuador – Search For Reporters Kidnapped in Border Area**

(U) Quito – Ecuadorean police are searching for two newspaper journalists and their driver who were kidnapped near the border with Colombia on 26 March. The three were seized in the Esmeraldas province, where dissident members of Colombia's FARC rebel group are active. Interior Minister Cesar navas said contact had been made with their kidnappers but gave no details and the three had passed a military checkpoint and had been warned about the dangers of entering the area, which has seen a recent spike in violence. Officials blame much of the violence on a man known as Guacho, an Ecuadorean member of the FARC who told Colombian radio station RCN that he had left the rebel group after 10 years due to a "disagreement."

SOURCE: 28 March 2018, [BBC](#)

**(U) Italy – Italian Anti-Terrorist Unit Arrest Moroccan, Investigating Others**

(U) Rome – Italian anti-terrorism police said they had arrested, Elmahdi Halili, 23, an Italian citizen of Moroccan origin on suspicion of supporting the Islamic State of Iraq and ash-Sham (ISIS) and were investigating his accomplices. It was the latest in a series of arrests this month involving suspected supporters of terrorist groups and came as Italy steps up the number of foreigners it expels. Police said Halili had received a two-year suspended prison term in 2015 for "instigating terrorism" by running a website that praised ISIS and hailed some of the attacks it or its supporters carried out in Europe.

SOURCE: 28 March 2018, [Reuters](#)

**(U) United Kingdom – Self-Styled ISIS Teacher Who Trained Children Sentenced to Life Imprisonment**

(U) London – Umar Haque, 25, who attempted to build an army of child jihadists for terror attacks in London has been jailed for life. Police believe Haque tried to radicalize at least 110 children, 35 of whom are now receiving long-term support. He wanted the 11 to 14-year-olds to help him attack Heathrow Airport, the Queen's Guard, Big Ben and other London sites after becoming 'obsessed' with the Westminster Bridge attack last March.

SOURCE: 27 March 2018, [Mirror](#)

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